

Summer 2017

# Criminal Justice Research Methods

Andrea Allen

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Andrea Allen & Scott Jacques

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# Criminal Justice Research Methods

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## Grants Collection

Affordable Learning Georgia Grants Collections are intended to provide faculty with the frameworks to quickly implement or revise the same materials as a Textbook Transformation Grants team, along with the aims and lessons learned from project teams during the implementation process.

Each collection contains the following materials:

- Linked Syllabus
  - The syllabus should provide the framework for both direct implementation of the grant team's selected and created materials and the adaptation/transformation of these materials.
- Initial Proposal
  - The initial proposal describes the grant project's aims in detail.
- Final Report
  - The final report describes the outcomes of the project and any lessons learned.



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# Initial Proposal

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## Application Details

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### Manage Application: ALG Textbook Transformation Grant

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**Award Cycle:** Round 4

**Internal Submission Deadline:** Monday, September 7, 2015

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**Application Title:** 151

**Submitter First Name:** Andrea

**Submitter Last Name:** Allen

**Submitter Title:** Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice

**Submitter Email Address:** andreaallen@clayton.edu

**Submitter Phone Number:** 4042778437

**Submitter Campus Role:** Proposal Investigator (Primary or additional)

**Applicant First Name:** Andrea

**Applicant Last Name:** Allen

**Co-Applciant Name(s):** Scott Jacques, Georgia State University

**Applicant Email Address:** andreaallen@clayton.edu

**Applicant Phone Number:** 4042778437

**Primary Appointment Title:** Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice

**Institution Name(s):** Clayton State University

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### Team Members (Name, Title, Department, Institutions if different, and email address for each):

Andrea Allen  
Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice  
Department of Social Sciences  
Clayton State University  
andreaallen@clayton.edu

Scott Jacques  
Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and Criminology  
Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology  
Georgia State University  
sjacques1@gsu.edu

### Sponsor, (Name, Title, Department, Institution):

Mara Mooney, Chair and Associate Professor, Department of Social Sciences, Clayton State University

Richard Wright, Chair and Professor, Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology, Georgia State University

**Proposal Title:** 151

**Course Names, Course Numbers and Semesters Offered:**

Clayton State University:

- Research Methods (SOC 4501) – offered Fall and Spring semesters
- Research Methods & Policy Evaluation (CRJU 4501) – offered Fall and Spring semesters

Georgia State University:

- Research Methods in Criminal Justice (3020) – offered Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters

**Final Semester of Instruction:** Fall 2016

**Average Number of Students per Course Section:** 25 at Clayton State University (CSU), 35 at Georgia State University (GSU)

**Number of Course Sections Affected by Implementation in Academic Year:** 4 at CSU, 2 at GSU

**Total Number of Students Affected by Implementation in Academic Year:** 170

**List the original course materials for students (including title, whether optional or required, & cost for each item):** Required text: Maxfield, M. G. & Babbie, E. R. (2011). Research methods for criminal justice and criminology, 3rd edition. (\$114 plus tax on amazon.com)  
Please note the above text is several years old; at present, the textbook is on its 7th edition and costs \$193.44 plus tax. The 3rd edition is assigned to reduce student cost, but its age makes it increasingly difficult to obtain. Thus, in the near future the 7th (or a later) edition will be assigned. A goal of this proposal is to avoid that adoption and, instead, offer a no-cost option to students.

**Proposal Categories:** No-Cost-to-Students Learning Materials

**Requested Amount of Funding:** \$10,800

**Original per Student Cost:** \$114 plus tax (or, in near future, \$193.44 plus tax)

**Post-Proposal Projected \$0**  
**Student Cost:**

**Projected Per Student \$114 plus tax (or, in near future, \$193.44**  
**Savings: plus tax)**

**Plan for Hosting Materials: D2L**

### **Project Goals:**

The primary goal of this textbook transformation is to reduce students' costs for Research Methods (a required course) at our respective institutions, Clayton State University (CSU) and Georgia State University (GSU). Research Methods textbooks are expensive. The normal price of such books is \$150 to \$200, and even earlier editions exceed \$100.

Please note that there is a particular need at CSU and GSU for no-cost options, as a substantial percentage of our student body populations are from relatively low-income backgrounds, evident by 64% of students at CSU and 55% at GSU being supported by the Pell Grant (USDOE, 2015).

A second goal of this textbook transformation is to streamline the course material and offer sources with greater readability. Many of the available textbooks contain excessive jargon and unnecessary information. Thus, when choosing no-cost materials for adoption, we will prioritize sources with the greatest readability and directness; this should improve student learning outcomes.

### **Statement of Transformation:**

The transformation will entail compiling source materials to use in lieu of a textbook. To do so, first we will conduct a content analysis of social science research methods textbooks. The purpose of this exercise is to determine 1) what content is consistently covered in such textbooks, and 2) in what order. (Please note that because criminology is an interdisciplinary field, social science textbooks are perfectly suited to criminology students.) Second, we will gather source materials on said content and arrange it in the most common order. Materials will be obtained using the library resources and open resources listed in the solicitation. The gathered materials will constitute the course text. This text will be used in both sections of Research Methods -- all taught by Dr. Allen -- offered by CSU's Department of Social Sciences, and the sections of Research Methods -- taught by Dr. Jacques -- that is offered by GSU's Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology. In the 2016-17 academic school year, they will teach the redesigned course to 6 sections, or about 170 students. Thus, based on the price of the current textbook's 3rd edition, the projected total student savings for that academic year is close to \$20,000 (\$114 per textbook + tax x 170 students). However, if the 7th edition of the textbook was adopted that year (which is the plan), the total student savings will exceed \$34,000 (\$193.44 + tax x 170).

This transformation will affect three stakeholders: students, faculty, and our respective universities, more specifically the Department of Social Sciences at CSU and the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology at GSU. All students seeking degrees in these departments are required to take Research Methods (with the exception of "Legal Studies" students at CSU).

As for students, the transformation will save them a sizeable amount of money, which, as already noted, is especially important at our institutions given that a large percent of the student bodies are from relatively low-income backgrounds. Also, we know from our experience that some students go several weeks, or longer, without the textbook because they cannot afford it when the course begins; of course, this is detrimental to their learning. By providing students with a no-cost textbook option, they will have access to course materials from the very beginning of the course and so their learning outcomes should improve. On a similar note, affording the current textbook requires more than 20 hours of labor in a minimum-wage position. Time spent in such a position to afford a textbook is potentially time spent away from studying. Here again, a no-cost textbook option should improve learning, in this case by freeing up time to study – instead of working to be able to afford studying. Furthermore, we aim to select no-cost source materials that are more readable and direct than traditional textbooks, which we anticipate to improve student performance.

The transformation will also impact us (the instructors) as we redesign the course. For one, the aforementioned content analysis of textbooks should improve our breadth and depth of knowledge as relates to designing and delivering a Research Methods course. Further, the transformation will allow us to tailor the new course to meet the needs of our students, which should improve course success.

This textbook transformation should positively impact our universities by improving retention and matriculation rates. At CSU, for instance, only 68% of students move on to their sophomore year and only 28% of on-time students graduate (College Factual, 2015). In part, this is due to the cost associated with attending college. On a similar note, one of GSU's strategic goals is to "[b]ecome a national model for undergraduate education by demonstrating that students from all backgrounds can achieve academic and career success at high rates" (GSU, 2015). Adopting a no-cost text should help CSU's and GSU's retention and matriculation rates.

### **Transformation Action Plan:**

The first step in our transformation plan will be to identify and review social science research methods textbooks on the market. To do so, we will search Amazon and Google. Then we will analyze these textbooks' table of contents, identifying the major topics covered within them, and the order in which topics are covered. The consistently covered topics will be included in our textbook transformation; also, the course will cover these topics in the order that is most common in the analyzed textbooks.

Once we determine the major topics to be covered in the Research Methods course, we will independently identify and review source materials covering these topics that are available through the Library Resources and Open Resources listed in this solicitation. When reviewing source materials, we will take into account many of the ALG's evaluation criteria: clarity, comprehensibility, readability, content accuracy and technical accuracy, adaptability, appropriateness, and accessibility. Moreover, any and all materials will comply with the USG's copyright policy.

After reviewing source materials, we will move to jointly select and adopt new course



materials, such as peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters or excerpts. Adopted materials will be posted to our individual classes on D2L.

We will also submit our course materials to the ASA's TRAILS Program. "TRAILS is an online, modular (by topic and type of teaching tool) and searchable database that reflects a major innovation in the creation and dissemination of peer-reviewed teaching resources. ... All new submissions to TRAILS undergo a two stage peer review process using public criteria based on empirically proven best practices in higher education. In this way, TRAILS provides a new form of evidence, which can be coupled with systematic peer review of teaching in the classroom, to help schools more objectively measure excellence in teaching" (ASA, 2015).

### **Regarding the activities expected from each team members:**

Together, we will design the course and syllabus. This will entail outlining the course content (i.e., major topics) to be covered in a syllabus, and the order in which topics will be presented; selecting readings on the topics of coverage; creating PowerPoints and lectures based on the readings; and organizing and posting the readings to D2L where students may access them.

The team members will be equal partners and consult with each other throughout the innovation process. Instead of "splitting the workload," each of us will perform all tasks in full (e.g., content analysis) and then meet to discuss our findings. Among other advantages, this will serve as a reliability check and facilitate critical thinking about how to maximize the potential of the redesigned course. Thus, both team members will be responsible for identifying, reviewing, selecting, adopting, and uploading source materials for this textbook transformation. The only instance in which we will work separately is when instructing the course at our respective institutions.

We consider our team to be "subject matter experts." Together we have extensive experience teaching Research Methods and thus have a good understanding of what materials should be used to best convey the information to our students. We also have extensive experience conducting research and have published in a variety of top-ranked journals in our field.

**Quantitative & Qualitative Measures:** We will evaluate the textbook transformation's effectiveness by student success and students' perceptions of the redesigned Research Methods course. To do so, we will rely on the following quantitative and qualitative measures:  
the number of students who drop, fail, and withdraw from the course;  
final grade distributions (mean, median, mode);  
students' teacher evaluations;  
test questions that assess proficiency of course learning outcomes.  
The above data will be compared within and between instructors, and also compared to similar data from prior semesters in which a traditional textbook was used.  
Additionally, we will work with CSU's Center for Instructional Development and GSU's Center for Instructional Innovation to develop a range of extra tools (quantitative and qualitative) for assessing learning outcomes. We intend for these assessment outcomes to be obtained by comparing students' knowledge at the beginning, midpoint, and end of the course. To be clear, we will draw on these extra tools when designing and implementing the course.

#### **Timeline:**

The timeline below indicates dates for which the following actions should be completed.

- September 2015: Notification of Award
- October 2015: Compile social science research methods textbooks
- November 2015: Conduct content analysis of textbooks, focusing on topic coverage and order in which topics are covered
- December 2015: Based on findings, decide for redesigned course which topics to cover and in what order
- January-March 2016: Identify, review, and select new source materials
- April 2016: Create and finalize course syllabus; upload source materials to D2L
- May-August 2016—Develop course PowerPoints and lectures based on the new source materials; create test questions measuring course learning outcomes; additionally, work with CSU's Center for Instructional Development and GSU's Center for Instructional Innovation to develop a range of other assessment tools
- August 2016—Implement the new Research Methods course; collect "beginning" data to be later used in assessment
- October 2016—Collect and analyze midpoint data outlined in section 1.4
- December 2016—Collect and analyze data outlined in section 1.4; work on final report; submit course materials to the ASA TRAILS program

**Budget:**

The requested **total budget is \$10,800** (\$5,000 x 2 team members + 800 for overall project expenses). Written out per item, our budget is:

- Salary Compensation for Andrea Allen = \$5,000
- Salary Compensation for Scott Jacques = \$5,000
- Overall Project Expenses = \$800

**Sustainability Plan:**

As individual instructors, we will offer this no-cost-to-student option in future course sections of Research Methods. Additionally, we will encourage other instructors teaching this course to adopt our course design. To maintain – and improve – course materials, we will meet at the end of each semester to determine if changes should be made for the next semester. Such changes will be based on student feedback and our own evaluations of “what worked” (and what did not) in the course.

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## References

- American Sociological Association (2015). *Teaching resources and innovations library for sociology*. Retrieved from <https://trails.asanet.org/Pages/TDLContent.aspx>.
- College Factual (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/clayton-state-university/academic-life/graduation-and-retention/>.
- Georgia State University (2015). *GSU's strategic plan*. Retrieved from <http://strategic.gsu.edu/preamble/goal-1/>.
- United States Department of Education (2015). *Distribution of federal pell grant programs funds by institution*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/finaid/prof/resources/data/pell-institution.html>.



College of Arts and Sciences

August 24, 2015

RE: Drs. Allen and Jacques - Application for Affordable Learning  
Georgia Textbook Transformation Grant

Dear Committee Members:

It is with enthusiasm that I support the application for a no-cost-to-students textbook transformation grant submitted by Dr. Andrea Allen and Dr. Scott Jacques. Their innovative proposal for a Research Methods textbook will benefit countless students across the State of Georgia, many of whom, particularly at our institution, will ultimately become first-generation applicants to graduate school. I firmly believe that Drs. Allen and Jacques will produce a no-cost textbook that becomes an invaluable addition to our state's collection of open education resources for many generations of students.

I also want to share my extremely favorable experience working with Dr. Allen in my capacity as chair of the Department of Social Sciences. Dr. Allen is a delightful colleague who is extremely dedicated to serving the students in our Criminal Justice program. I am consistently impressed with her scholarly achievements, her multitude of service activities, and her ability to inspire and educate students, particularly in the most challenging of subjects. In addition to excelling in her own research endeavors, Dr. Allen routinely teaches our Research Methods course, in which she inspires students to reach a potential many did not think could be achieved.

I urge you to award a no-cost-to-students textbook development grant to Drs. Allen and Jacques. The Affordable Learning Georgia initiative and future students across our state will benefit over many years from the availability of a no-cost-to-students Research Methods textbook.

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to discuss this recommendation in more detail, please feel free to contact me at (678) 466-4642.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mara Mooney".

Mara Mooney, J.D.  
Chair, Dept. of Social Sciences  
Associate Professor of Legal Studies

August 21, 2015

Dear Selection Committee:

This letter certifies that the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology at Georgia State University supports development of the proposed course. The course is entirely sustainable. Indeed, our department offers Research Methods every semester and all students seeking a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice and criminology must pass this course. The proposed no-cost-to-student course is sorely needed at almost any institution, but especially at ours because so many of our students come to us from low-income backgrounds. Dr. Jacques, who is teaching our Research Methods course currently, is a widely-respected researcher with a rock-solid grasp of social science research methods.

Kind regards,



Richard Wright  
Professor and Chair  
Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology  
Andrew Young School of Policy Studies  
Georgia State University  
rwright28@gsu.edu  
<http://aysps.gsu.edu/profile/richard-wright/>

# Syllabus

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**RESEARCH METHODS**  
**SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE**



WEEK	TOPIC
Week 1	Syllabus & Intro to Course
	The Nature of Science
Week 2	The Purpose of Research
	A Good Study
Week 3	Utility of Science
	The Use of Originality
Week 4	Ethical Research
	Ethical Research
Week 5	The IRB
	Your Research Project
Week 6	TEST 1
	Research Design
Week 7	Research Design
	Sampling
Week 8	Sampling
	Sampling

Week 9	<i>No Class – Fall Break</i>
	Sampling
Week 10	TEST 2
	Data Collection – Recording Information
Week 11	Data Collection – Recording Information
	Data Collection – (Designing) Instruments
Week 12	Data Collection – (Designing) Instruments
	Analyzing Quantitative Data
Week 13	Analyzing Quantitative Data
	Analyzing Qualitative Data
Week 14	Analyzing Qualitative Data
	Code Your Own Data
Week 15	Review
	<i>No Class—Thanksgiving Break</i>
Week 16	Your Research Paper
	TEST 3
Week 17	Research Project Due

**RESEARCH METHODS**

**TEXTBOOK INDEX**

# **“Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices.”**

**By Bhattacharjee (2012)**

[http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=oa\\_text  
books](http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=oa_text_books)

## **Nature of Science:**

Science	1-2
Theories	2-3, 14, 25-27
Concepts	3, 10
Independent Variables	12
Dependent Variables	12
Typology	26, 53
Explanatory	28
Falsifiability	28

## **Purpose of Research:**

Purpose of Research	3
Data Collection	23
Data Analysis	23
Deduction	3-4, 14-15
Induction	3-4, 14-15

## **The Use of Originality**

Literature Review	21
-------------------	----

## **Ethics**

Ethics	137
Unethical Research Examples	137-138, 141-142
Violations in Academia	139-140

## **IRB**

Institutional Review Board	140
Harm	137
Voluntariness	137-138
Informed Consent	138
Anonymity	138
Confidentiality	138-139
Deception	139

## **Research Design**

Research Design	35
Experimental Research Designs	38-39
Treatment Group	83-84
Control Group	83-84
Random Selection and Assignment	38, 84
Pretest and Posttest	84, 85-86
Posttest Only Design	86
Threats to Internal Validity	84-85
Quasi-Experimental Research Designs	39
Cross-Sectional Research Designs	39
Longitudinal Research Designs	39
Internal Validity	35-36
External Validity	36-37
Treatment	37-38
Statistical Conclusion Validity	37

### **Sampling**

Unit of Analysis	9-10, 65-66
Population	65-66
Sampling	65
Generalize/ability	66
Representativeness	66
Probability Sampling	66-68
Nonprobability Sampling	69-70
Sampling Frame	66
Population Parameter	70
Sample Statistic	70
Sampling Error	70
Sampling Distribution	70-71
Standard Error	71
Confidence Interval	71-72
Confidence Level	71-72
Simple Random Sampling	67
Stratified Random Sampling	67-68
Cluster Sampling	68
Multi-stage Sampling	68
Convenience Sampling	69
Quota Sampling	69
Purposive Sampling	69-70
Snowball Sampling	70

### **Data Collection: Recording Information**

Quantitative	35, 44, 103
--------------	-------------

Qualitative	35, 44, 103
Secondary Data	39
Observation	106
Degrees of Participation	106-107
Interviews	106
Surveys	73-74
Quantitative Survey	74-75
Qualitative Protocol	

### **Data Collection: Designing Instruments**

Quantitative Instruments	74-78
Qualitative Instruments	78-80
Reliability	55-58
Response Bias	80-81
Closed-ended vs. Open-ended	96
Structured vs. Unstructured	96
Ordering of Questions	77
Question Content	75-77
Construct Validity	37
Operationalization	43-45
Conceptualization	43-44
Hypothesis	13
Levels of Measurement	45-47, 75
Mail Survey	73-74
Computer Assisted Survey	74-75
Focus Group	78
Telephone Survey/Interview	78-79
Inter-rater Reliability	57
Test-retest Reliability	57
How to Interview/Survey Participants	77-78
Applied Research	2
Descriptive Research	6

### **Analyzing Quantitative Data**

Univariate Analysis	121-122
Measures of Central Tendency	121-122
Dispersion	122
Descriptives (Frequency Distribution)	121
Bivariate Analysis	122-127
Correlation	122-127
Contingency Table (Cross-Tab)	125-127
Zero Correlation	122
Perfection Correlation	122
Statistical Significance	125

Null Hypothesis	124
Alternative Hypothesis	124
P-Value	125, 129
Significance Level	129
Substantive Significance (Effect Size)	134
Multivariate Analysis	129

### **Analyzing Qualitative Data**

Transcription	96, 109
Purpose of Qualitative Analysis	113
Coding	113-117
Paradigm	17-18
Concept Coding	113-114
Theory Coding	97, 114-115

**“Introduction to Criminal Justice Research Methods: An Applied Approach”  
By Vito, Tewksbury, and Kunselman (2014)**

[http://ezproxy.clayton.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=814755&site=eds-live&scope=site&ebv=EB&ppid=pp\\_54](http://ezproxy.clayton.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=814755&site=eds-live&scope=site&ebv=EB&ppid=pp_54)

**Nature of Science:**

Concepts	9
Independent Variables	11
Dependent Variables	12
Explanatory	6-7

**Purpose of Research:**

Purpose of Research	4
Deduction	8
Induction	8

**The Use of Originality**

Literature Reviews	37-41
Sources of Literature	29-37

**Ethics**

Ethics	43
Unethical Research Examples	43-45, 50, 52-53

**IRB**

Institutional Review Board	44, 53-54
Belmont Report	46
Harm	45, 49-50
Voluntariness	45
Informed Consent	54-57
Anonymity	47-48
Confidentiality	48-49
Deception	50-53

**Research Design**

Research Design	91
Classical Experiment	92-99
Experimental Group	93
Control Group	93-94



Random Assignment	92-93
Pretest and Posttest	92
Cause and Effect	12
Posttest Only Design	108
Threats to Internal Validity	103-107
Quasi-Experimental Research Designs	99-100
Comparison Group	99
Cross-Sectional Research Designs	102
Longitudinal Research Designs	102
Time Series Design	102
Cohort Study	103
Internal Validity	103
External Validity	107
Generalizability	107

### **Sampling**

Unit of Analysis	10, 117
Population	119
Sampling	115-116
Generalize/ability	107
Representativeness	116-117
Heterogeneity	119
Homogeneity	119
Probability Sampling	119-120
Nonprobability Sampling	119-120, 122-125
Sampling Frame	116
Sampling Error	116
Simple Random Sampling	120-121
Systematic Sampling	121
Stratified Random Sampling	121
Cluster Sampling	121
Convenience Sampling	122-123
Quota Sampling	123
Purposive Sampling	123
Snowball Sampling	123-124

### **Data Collection: Recording Information**

Unit of Analysis	10, 117
Quantitative	172-175
Qualitative	172-175
Deduction	8
Induction	8
Self-Report	80-84
Interviews	202-213

Surveys	132
Observation	175-178, 188-197
Degrees of Participation	178-188
Settings of Observations	188-189
Recruitment	189-190
Closed-ended vs. Open-ended	142-144
Structured vs. Unstructured	142-144

### **Data Collection: Designing Instruments**

Subjective	202-204
Reliability	65-66, 150
Generalizability	107
External Validity	107
Validity	65-66
Quantitative	172-175
Qualitative	172-175
Structured vs. Unstructured	142-144
Closed-ended vs. Open-ended	142-144
Interviews	202-213
Surveys	132
Interview Protocol	204-209
Field Note Protocol	195-197
Question Content	142
Operationalization	150-151
Conceptualization	221
Hypothesis	10-11
Levels of Measurement	153-155
Likert Scale	156-157
Self-Administered Survey	135
Mail/Email Survey	135-136
Computer Assisted Survey	137-140
Focus Group	219-224
Response Rate	136-137
Ordering of Questions	141
How to Interview Participants	210-213
Applied Research	17-22
Descriptive Research	5-6

### **Analyzing Qualitative Data**

Transcription	213-241
Purpose of Qualitative Analysis	214, 224-225
Coding	214-217
Concept Coding	215-217
Secondary Coding	217

# Final Report

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**Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Grants**

**Final Report**

**Round 4, Proposal 151**

**Dr. Andrea Allen, Clayton State University,  
and Dr. Scott Jacques, Georgia State University**

**UPDATED SPRING 2017**

**Date:** May 4, 2017

**Grant Number:** 151

**Institution Name(s):** Clayton State University (CSU) and Georgia State University (GSU)

**Team Members (Name, Title, Department, Institutions if different, and email address for each):**

Andrea Allen  
Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice  
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[andreaallen@clayton.edu](mailto:andreaallen@clayton.edu)

Scott Jacques  
Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and Criminology  
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Georgia State University  
[sjacques1@gsu.edu](mailto:sjacques1@gsu.edu)

**Project Lead:** Andrea Allen (CSU)

**Course Name(s) and Course Numbers:** CSU—Research Methods (SOCI 4501); GSU—Research Methods & Policy Evaluation (CRJU 4501)

**Semester Project Began:** Fall 2015

**Semester(s) of Implementation:** Fall 2016, Spring 2017

**Average Number of Students Per Course Section:** Fall 2016: 25 (CSU); 35 (GSU); Spring 2017: 15 (CSU); 50 (GSU)

**Number of Course Sections Affected by Implementation:** Fall 2016-3; Spring 2017-2

**Total Number of Students Affected by Implementation:** Fall 2016-82 ; Spring 2017-65

## **1. NARRATIVE**

### **Transformation Experience**

**Fall 2016:** Our experience with the textbook transformation was positive. We enjoyed the challenge of finding alternative materials to the traditional textbook for Research Methods. The major difficulty we faced was finding no-cost materials that complied with copyright laws.

We were only able to identify one general research methods textbook that was free for use: “Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices”, by Anol Bhattacharjee (2012).

This book is made free to anyone at <<http://tinyurl.com/9dml8fh>>. Also, we identified a research methods textbook geared toward criminal justice students: “Introduction to Criminal Justice Research: An Applied Approach (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)” by Vito, Kunselman, and Tewksbury (2014). This book is available to USG students through Galileo.

Neither book amounted to our ideal textbook. Rather, they suffered from problems such as excessive jargon; material that is redundant or not streamlined; unnecessary information. However, the books are useful in that they cover all of the material we had planned to teach based on results of our content analysis of topics typically covered in research methods textbooks. Therefore, we used these textbooks as reference sources, rather than “teaching to the textbooks.” In practice, that involved, one, developing a streamlined course organization based on our content analysis (see Sample Course Outline); two, developing concomitant learning objectives and lectures; three, making indexes for each of the aforementioned textbooks that pinpoint which parts of each is relevant to particular aspects of the course material and, thus, should be referenced during those respective portions of the course. By using two free textbooks in that way, students had access to three perspectives on research methods, namely that of Bhattacharjee, Vito and colleagues, and ourselves.

**Spring 2017:** Again, our experience with the textbook transformation was positive. This semester we used the same research methods textbooks we identified for implementation last semester, Fall 2016. These were “Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices”, by Anol Bhattacharjee (2012), which is free to anyone at <<http://tinyurl.com/9dml8fh>>, and “Introduction to Criminal Justice Research: An Applied Approach (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)” by Vito, Kunselman, and Tewksbury (2014), which is available to USG students through Galileo. Though neither book is ideal for reasons mentioned above, at this time we feel these are the best options for the course.

### **Transformative Impacts on Our Instruction**

This grant has transformed our instruction by encouraging us to “think outside the box” in topic coverage and the books we used for the course. This process has shown us that you do not have to teach with and to a textbook. Moreover, a course’s content may be improved by not doing so. We used the data from the aforementioned content analysis to outline and produce a comprehensive yet elegant version of course material, rather than rely on the eccentricities of a particular textbook. However, textbooks can be useful, so we also were pushed to locate and index free textbooks so that students could use them as reference sources to further understand course material.

### **Transformative Impacts on Students and Their Performance**

**Fall 2016:** The transformation positively impacted our students and their performance in several ways. The following summarizes findings detailed in the “Supporting Data & Related Documents” file: Compared to sections of research methods offered prior to the

transformation, students at CSU in the ALG version of the course had a higher pass rate, a lower withdrawal rate, a lower failure rate (see Figure 1), and higher minimum grade (see Figure 3); there was no change among GSU students in those outcomes (see Figures 2 and 4), except that one student withdrew in the post-transformation version but none did in the pre-transformation version (see Figure 2). At CSU and GSU, students demonstrated improved knowledge of the learning objectives over the course of the semester (see Tables 1 and 2). At CSU and GSU, students in the pre- and post-transformation versions of the course had effectively the same mean, median, and highest maximum grade (see Figures 3 and 4). It is important to keep in mind, of course, that though students did not improve in every outcome, they stayed “stable” without investing a hundred or more dollars on a research methods textbook. On that note, the students had quite favorable views of the no-cost materials (see Table 3 and associated qualitative statements). All things considered, then, the transformation was rational and will be implemented in future sections of the course.

**Spring 2017:** The transformation positively impacted our students and their performance in several ways. The following summarizes findings detailed in the “Supporting Data & Related Documents” file: Compared to sections of research methods offered prior to the transformation, students at CSU in the ALG version of the course had a higher percentage of passing grades, a lower withdrawal rate, overall lower failure rate (see Figure 1), and higher minimum grade (see Figure 3). At GSU, there was a decrease in the percentage of passing grades and increase in withdrawals and fails as compared to previous semesters, including pre- and post-transformation (see Figures 2 and 4). Reasons for this change in outcomes is discussed in the Co-Factors section, below. At CSU and GSU, students demonstrated improved knowledge of the learning objectives over the course of the semester (see Tables 1b and 2b). At CSU and GSU, students in the pre- and post-transformation versions of the course had effectively the same mean, median, and highest maximum grade (see Figures 3 and 4). We maintain that it is important to keep in mind that though students did not improve in every outcome, they stayed “stable” without investing a hundred or more dollars on a research methods textbook. On that note, the students had quite favorable views of the no-cost materials (see Table 3b and associated qualitative statements). All things considered, we believe the transformation remains rational and we will continue to implement it in future sections of the course.

### **Lessons Learned**

In addition to the “transformative impacts on our instruction,” perhaps the major lesson learned that we would act on next time is how to make better use of Galileo to find no-cost learning materials. Prior to the transformation, we were aware of how Galileo may be used to gain free access to articles, but late into the transformation we also learned that it provides free e-access to many books, including textbooks. We will use this lesson when prepping courses in the future to minimize, if not eliminate, the costs of books for students.

## 2. QUOTES

**Fall 2016:** Overall, students from both CSU and GSU positively evaluated the no-cost learning materials. An exhaustive list of comments are found in the “Supporting Data & Related Documents” file, but the following quotes are illustrative of the themes contained therein:

“It was convenient and affordable. I’m broke and would not have been able to afford a textbook anyways.” (CSU student)

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“It’s free. Sometimes easier to find information than a regular textbook.”  
(CSU student)

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“It is available to me from any computer. I can look at it on computer, tablet, or phone.”  
(CSU student)

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“The ability to access a textbook from almost anywhere without the cost and carrying the weight of a traditional textbook.” (GSU student)

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“It was convenient. I use my laptop most of the time and having an online textbook made it easier.” (GSU student)

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“Free. My money did not go to waste.” (GSU student)

While most students viewed the no-cost materials positively, a few expressed the preference for a traditional textbook. One reason is due to the perception that a traditional textbook can be highlighted, whereas a digital textbook cannot. A GSU student, for instance, remarked, “I am not a big fan of digital textbooks. I would much rather a traditional textbook to highlight material needed,” and a CSU student commented that, “I could not highlight key points, because I did not have a physical textbook.” However, we do know that PDFs can be highlighted, so in the future we will show students how to do so. A second reason that some students preferred the traditional textbook over the digital is that the former did not lead to eye strain, whereas the latter did. One student stated that “[t]oo much online reading strains my eyes, so needed to print some sections to read later” (CSU student). Another said, “Staring at the screen too long is strenuous for my eyes” (GSU student). A third reason students disliked the digital textbook relates to technology: One CSU student said, “[you] had to have technology readily available”, whereas others said, “[It is] dependent on wifi which can fail” (CSU student) and “[you] can be distracted by [the] internet” (CSU student).



**Spring 2017:** Overall, students from both CSU and GSU positively evaluated the no-cost learning materials. An exhaustive list of comments are found in the “Supporting Data & Related Documents” file, but the following quotes are illustrative of the themes contained therein:

“It was very convenient for me and I liked that it was free.” (CSU student)

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“It was convenient to access, and I saved a great amount of money. It was helpful it was environmentally friendly.”

(CSU student)

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“It was within my spending budget and more convenient for me to use since I’m always using my PC.” (CSU student)

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“I like that I can access it wherever. I can have it on any electronic device. It is easy to transport from place to place. I can do my reading wherever without having to worry about if my huge textbook will fit. It is a lot easier.” (GSU student)

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“It was easy to search to go back to terms that I didn’t understand because it was a PDF. It was easier to keep track of what I needed to read as well. I could read the material anywhere because I have the text downloaded to my smartphone.” (GSU student)

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“I like it because I was able to highlight and underline notes without having to worry because I was not rending the book.” (GSU student)

While most students viewed the no-cost materials positively, a few expressed the preference for a traditional textbook. One reason is that the digital textbook requires an internet connection, unless it is already downloaded. To this end, a GSU student stated, “You would have to have internet to access the digital textbook and everyone don’t have internet. They would have to either got to the school or to a diner or somewhere to use their WIFI in order to access the textbook.” Another reason some students preferred the traditional textbook over the digital is they did not like having to read on the computer. One student stated, “I don’t like looking at a computer all the time” (GSU student). Another said, “When I didn’t have access to a printer, I would have to read the computer screen, and my computer is pretty small” (GSU student).

### **3. QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE MEASURES**

#### **3A. OVERALL MEASUREMENTS**

**Fall 2016:** The total number of students affected in this project is **82**: CSU: 50, GSU: 32.

Overall, students had a positive opinion of the materials used in the course, as evidenced by findings from a survey administered at the end of the semester; the questions and results are found in the “Supporting Data & Related Documents” file. Quantitative Results appear in Table 3, with qualitative results found on the pages thereafter.

**Spring 2017:** The total number of students affected in this phase of the project is **65**: CSU: 15, GSU: 50.

Overall, students had a positive opinion of the materials used in the course, as evidenced by findings from a survey administered at the end of the semester; the questions and results are found in the “Supporting Data & Related Documents” file. Quantitative Results appear in Table 3b, with qualitative results found on the pages thereafter.

### **Students’ Perceptions of and Experiences with No-Cost Materials**

**Fall 2016:** We ascertained students’ perceptions of and experiences with no-cost materials by administering a survey to students at the end of the semester. The instrument contains both quantitative and qualitative measures. Quantitative data were obtained by asking students about their agreement with the statements, “Textbooks are too expensive”; “I have a small budget for books”; “Course content should be free”. Responses were operationalized on a 5-point Likert scale from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree.” Also, students were also asked to select whether they prefer a Digital Textbook (=1) or a Traditional Textbook for the course (=0). Qualitative data were obtained by asking students three open-ended questions: “What did you like about the Digital Textbook?”; “What did you dislike about the Digital Textbook?”; and “Is there any way you wanted to use the textbook but couldn’t because it is digital?” As noted above, results from this survey are found in Table 3 and the subsequent pages of the “Supporting Data & Related Documents” file.

### **Student Learning Outcomes and Grades**

**Was the overall comparative impact on student performance in terms of learning outcomes and grades in the semester(s) of implementation over previous semesters positive, neutral, or negative?**

Choose One:

- X   Positive: Higher performance outcomes measured over previous semester(s)
- Neutral: Same performance outcomes over previous semester(s)
- Negative: Lower performance outcomes over previous semester(s)

### **Drop/Fail/Withdraw Rate:**

  3.5   % of students, out of a total   82   students affected, dropped/failed/withdrew from the course in the final semester of implementation.

Choose One:

- X   Positive: This is a lower percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)
- Neutral: This is the same percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)
- Negative: This is a higher percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)

**Spring 2017:** We ascertained students' perceptions of and experiences with no-cost materials by administering a survey to students at the end of the semester. We slightly amended this survey from the version previously administered. The instrument contains both quantitative and qualitative measures. Quantitative data were obtained by asking students about their agreement with the statements, "Textbooks are too expensive"; "The cost of textbooks is more than I can afford"; "Students would do better in college if textbooks were less expensive". Responses were operationalized on a 5-point Likert scale from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree." Also, students were asked to select whether they prefer or would have preferred a Digital Textbook (=1) or a Print Textbook for the course (=0). Qualitative data were obtained by asking students two open-ended questions: "What did you like about the Digital Textbook?" and "What did you dislike about the Digital Textbook?" As noted above, results from this survey are found in Table 3b and the subsequent pages of the "Supporting Data & Related Documents" file.

### **Student Learning Outcomes and Grades**

**Was the overall comparative impact on student performance in terms of learning outcomes and grades in the semester(s) of implementation over previous semesters positive, neutral, or negative?**

Compared to Fall 2016 (first semester of implementation), we achieved similar results for performance outcomes.

Choose One:

- Positive: Higher performance outcomes measured over previous semester(s)
- X  Neutral: Same performance outcomes over previous semester(s)
- Negative: Lower performance outcomes over previous semester(s)

### **Drop/Fail/Withdraw Rate:**

Compared to Fall 2016 (first semester of implementation), we had a higher percentage of students who failed and withdrew.

  15.4   % of students, out of a total   65   students affected, dropped/failed/withdrew from the course in the final semester of implementation.

Choose One:

- \_\_\_\_ Positive: This is a lower percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)
- \_\_\_\_ Neutral: This is the same percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)
- X   Negative: This is a higher percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)

### **3b. NARRATIVE**

#### **Drop, Fail, Withdraw (DFW) Delta Rates**

**Fall 2016:** The DFW data are found in the “Supporting Data & Related Documents” file. Unfortunately, we were unable to obtain drop data. Thus, our analysis is of pass, fail, and withdrawals pre- and post-transformation. At CSU, overall the percent of fails and withdrawals dropped post-transformation, and the percentage of students who passed increased from pre-transformation semesters (see Figure 1). At GSU, the percentage of pass, fail, and withdrawals did not change from pre- to post-transformation, save the one student who withdrew from the post-transformation course due to the inability to pay tuition (see Figure 2).

**Spring 2017:** The DFW data are found in the “Supporting Data & Related Documents” file. Unfortunately, we were unable to obtain drop data. Thus, our analysis is of pass, fail, and withdrawals pre- and post-transformation. At CSU, overall the percent of fails increased from Fall 2016. The reason for this is one student failed in a class that was very small to begin with (n=15), so this one student accounted for about 7% of the class. The number of withdrawals, however, reduced from Fall 2016. Overall, at CSU the pass, fails, and withdrawals remain lower post-transformation, as compared to pre-transformation semesters (see Figure 1). At GSU, the percentage of passing grades this semester decreased and the percentage of fail and withdrawals increased, as compared to all prior semesters (both pre- and post-transformation) (see Figure 2). An explanation for the increase in fails is provided in the Co-Factors section. As for withdrawals, 2 of 5 were withdrawn for nonpayment. We can only speculate why the other three students withdrew; perhaps it was because of the class being online-hybrid.

#### **Student Success in Learning Objectives**

**Fall 2016:** With assistance from our centers for instructional development/innovation, we developed new course learning objectives based on each lecture. The new course objectives are as follows: (1) Explain the nature of science; (2) Explain the purpose of research (science, originality, good study); (3) Describe ethics (including IRB); (4) Describe sampling; (5) Explain the data collection process; (6) Describe the analysis of data. To gauge student success in these learning objectives, we developed a short quiz that students completed the first and last days of class; a copy appears in the “Supporting Data & Related Documents” file. We compared their responses across these two time points. Results appear in Tables 1 and 2 of the aforementioned file. Data are presented as percentage of incorrect answers by question, and

percent change from beginning to end of the semester. Overall, findings show that students improved their knowledge of the course material over the semester, thereby achieving the course's learning objectives. For a few questions, however, the percentage of incorrect scores had a very small increase. We will discuss with each other whether this is a consequence of our course design and thus calling for change therein.

**Spring 2017:** This semester we used the same course objectives as in Fall 2016 to assess students' learning. We administered the same short quiz to students on the first and last days of class; a copy appears in the "Supporting Data & Related Documents" file. We compared their responses across these two time points. Results appear in Tables 1b and 2b of the aforementioned file. Data are presented as percentage of incorrect answers by question, and percent change from beginning to end of the semester. Overall, findings show that students improved their knowledge of the course material over the semester, thereby achieving the course's learning objectives. For a few questions, however, there was a marginal increase in the percentage of incorrect scores.

#### **Co-Factors**

**Fall 2016:** We are not aware of any unique co-factors, for better or worse, that arose during the semester and thereby might have influenced the outcomes.

**Spring 2017:** Unlike Fall 2016 (first semester of implementation), there were a couple of co-factors that arose in the GSU section, which we believe negatively impacted the percentage of students who passed, failed, and withdrew. This section was taught online for the first time and was hybrid in nature. The class would meet online once a week. Prior to the online meeting, which took place in a Blackboard collaborate session, students were to review an audio-recorded lecture. During the online meeting, Dr. Jacques would then discuss the major takeaway points from the audio-recorded lecture and answer any student questions. Attendance, however, was very poor. Dr. Jacques reports that only about half the students would attend the Blackboard collaborate session. In our experience, we find that research methods is one of the more difficult courses for students because of the conceptually dense content. Thus, attendance is important so that the instructor can explain and reinforce the material. Poor attendance combined with the impersonal nature of the course (i.e., through a computer and not in person), we believe, contributed to the percent of failing grades, and perhaps the withdrawals.

#### **4. SUSTAINABILITY PLAN**

**Fall 2016:** As individual instructors, we will offer this no-cost-to-student option in future course sections of Research Methods. Additionally, we will encourage other instructors teaching this course to adopt our course design and materials. Next semester, for instance, a colleague of Andrea Allen's at CSU is adopting this course's materials for use in her Research Methods courses (undergraduate and graduate).

To maintain – and improve – course materials, we will continue to monitor ALG’s website, GALILEO, and OER platforms for new and updated no-cost materials useful to our courses. Any changes to course materials will continue to be based on student feedback and our own evaluations of “what worked.”

**Spring 2017:** We will continue to offer this no-cost-to-student option in future course sections of Research Methods. Additionally, we will encourage other instructors teaching this course to adopt our course design and materials. This semester, for instance, a colleague of Andrea Allen’s at CSU adopted this course’s materials for use in her Research Methods courses (undergraduate and graduate). That colleague intends to do the same for her two sections of Research Methods in Fall 2017.

Again, we intend to maintain – and improve – course materials, by continuing to monitor ALG’s website, GALILEO, and OER platforms for new and updated no-cost materials useful to our courses. Any changes to course materials will continue to be based on student feedback and our own evaluations of “what worked.”

## **5. FUTURE PLANS**

**Fall 2016:** This grant has provided us the opportunity and platform to explore no-cost ways of delivering course materials in lieu of traditional textbooks. Further, this grant has shown us that with a bit of creativity and access to open resources, we can adopt no-cost materials in our other courses. As noted above in describing lessons learned, a positive outcome of this transformation was learning Galileo provides free e-access to many books, including textbooks. We will use this lesson when prepping courses in the future to minimize, if not eliminate, the costs of books for students. For example, Dr. Allen has found free e-books on Galileo that she will use in a course she is prepping at the graduate level, “Juvenile Justice.” Also, Dr. Jacques intends to do the same when he revamps his online course, “Social Science and the American Crime Problem,” which has hundreds of students each semester.

In our field of criminology and criminal justice, staples of the curriculum include Research Methods and Introduction to Criminal Justice. This coming semester (spring 2017), we are offering a no-cost materials version of Introduction to Criminal Justice. We mention this because after delivering that course, and possibly after delivering a no-cost materials version of Criminology (another staple), we intend to write an article about our experience and submit it to the *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*. We believe others in our field will be interested to learn about the possibilities of reducing the cost of textbooks without hurting, and possibly while enhancing, course material and related outcomes.

**Spring 2017:** We have continued to transform other classes to no-cost materials and have also encouraged our colleagues to do so. This summer Dr. Allen is using free e-books on Galileo and publicly available reports from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention for her graduate level, “Juvenile Justice Seminar” course. She has also encouraged one of her colleagues to adopt no-cost materials for her Race and Crime, Juvenile Justice, and Introduction

to Criminal Justice courses, which she will teaching in Fall 2017. At GSU, Dr. Jacques is working to transform his online course, "Social Science and the American Crime Problem," to no-cost materials for Fall 2017. This class will have a major economic impact as it has hundreds of students each semester.

#### **6. DESCRIPTION OF PHOTOGRAPH**

(left to right) Dr. Andrea Allen, Clayton State University, PI and instructor of record; Dr. Scott Jacques, Georgia State University, Co-PI and instructor of record